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**Love and  
Ethics**

Wendell L. A.  
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BY ELLEN KEY

THE CENTURY OF THE CHILD  
THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD  
LOVE AND MARRIAGE  
LOVE AND ETHICS  
THE WOMAN MOVEMENT  
RAHEL VARNHAGEN

*[In preparation]*

# **Love and Ethics**

**By**  
**Ellen Key**

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## Note

**E**LLEN KEY'S startling views on the marriage relation in "Love and Marriage" imply far more than a refusal to accept the sanctified, time-honoured beliefs held by the majority to-day. The heat of the arguments provoked by her bold contentions often blinds her adversaries to the basic moral good in her creed. She elucidates some of the most difficult problems in eugenics by showing how the right marriage relation, founded on a higher moral standard in the sex relation, will make woman more capable of doing her share in the great work of social reconstruction.

Valuable suggestions for the child-culture of the future are offered when she insists upon a change in the conditions which hamper woman in her highest work as a mother, and rob children of a mother's care. Love has



assumed a deeper aspect since woman's powers have been liberated, hence we must strive for a higher perfection in the relation of the sexes.

In "Love and Ethics" she deals with sex problems with the courage and the purity of mind which such themes demand, and she challenges the permanence of current ideals against the law of life which means change and growth. We must anticipate the necessity of establishing a new standard of moral values if present-day social wrongs and abuses are to be remedied. Ellen Key points the way to these higher values, without demanding that her revolutionary ideas of reform be translated into immediate action. Conditions are not ripe for the radical changes she suggests. A gradual transformation of moral values must lead the way to a better future, founded on a higher conception of love.

A. K. B.

## Love and Ethics

**I**N love, in which the happiness of the individual and the well-being of society so frequently conflict, the present conception of duty demands the unconditional sacrifice of the individual to society. All the state needs, we are told, is healthy fathers and mothers, the certainty of the permanent union of the parents to secure the education of their progeny. Whenever the happiness of the individual interferes with this requirement, the individual must be sacrificed. That this entails suffering upon him is no reason for loosening the marriage bond, and certainly not so long as the majority of parents are agreed that children are best cared for in the family. Therefore, it is said, the state is not interested in any change in marriage forms. To facilitate divorce would not remove the causes of the discords that arise whenever

human beings live in close union. Even if the present form of marriage does not meet the demands of the most highly developed types of men and women, we must accept the status that benefits society as a whole when confronted with the choice between an innovation that would benefit the few but be harmful to the many, and the existing order that brings suffering to the few but benefits the collectivity. At the present time easy divorce would only slacken the marriage tie by making for disintegration. The destruction of the family, hence of the nation, would be the result. Accordingly, for love to demand happiness is downright rebellion against the welfare of the state. History, ethnography, and nature do not bear out the theory that happiness is to be achieved by individualism in love. The lesson they teach is that of quiet self-denial and courageous fulfilment of duty. As soon as children come, it is said, the parents' demands for their own happiness must cease. If they do not, nature, in obedience to her laws, will punish them for the neglect of their duty through the children.

The great error in this theory of duty, not only as it affects love but even all other human relations, is the notion that society is *necessarily* benefited by the sacrifice of the individual. And the evidence adduced to prove this theory is equally false. What history and ethnography show is but the workings of what we call human nature, a very changing phenomenon varying with time, nationality, and climate. They show that what "nature" commands on the one hand she forbids on the other; that what is denied her in one way she exacts in another way. In France, for example, the arguments advanced to-day against divorce are that "remarriage is against nature," that "a woman is never a true mother outside the family," that the family does not depend upon what our reason tells us, but upon "natural laws" proved by sociology and biology. Such arguments make it difficult to forget the "natural law" that has made adultery the shadow of indissoluble marriage, especially in France. Every defence of marriage confirms Lassalle's words, that the art of petty diplomatic souls consists in lying away

the truth and denying what is. One would suppose, on hearing these arguments, that those who attack marriage were trying to destroy a beautiful idyll. As a matter of fact, the horrors of the present system are such that what we should do is compare them with the possible dangers of a new system and see which are to be dreaded the more. Even if the social conditions to-day were not the cause of much impurity and unhappiness, the question is not, "Are modern marriages good enough for the needs of society?" The question is, "How can we find a more efficient ethical code than the present one for improving the species?"

The basic idea of "Love and Marriage" was not that *the individual must obtain the highest measure of happiness in the love relation, but that society must be so adjusted as to make the happiness of the individual subserve the betterment of the species.*

In "Love and Marriage" I pointed out that those who insist on monogamy, that is, a lifelong love relation, as the only moral relationship between the sexes, disregard the

inevitable consequence of such an ethical standard, namely, the waste of a large amount of splendid life energy which if utilized would produce fine offspring and so aid in the improvement of the race ; while the worse elements of society would not be deterred by any ethical principle from propagating their kind. Such high-strung idealism would produce the same results as the convents in the Middle Ages, and, under present social conditions, this standard of morality would hinder the improvement of the species, although the trend of evolution is unmistakably toward *real* unity of love as the final goal, and although unity of the soul and the senses can already be laid down as the condition of true chastity in the union of the sexes in or out of marriage.

From the point of view of the good of the species, the legal and ecclesiastical form of morality cannot hold its ground against the most highly developed sex consciousness of to-day and its ethics. Morality seeks new standards in itself as well as in the laws governing the conditions that make for the improvement of the race, laws which science has already

discovered, or, with ever-increasing zeal, is seeking to discover. These laws and this consciousness, I pointed out in my previous work, may sometimes conflict. Sex idealism, for example, holds that the sole sanction for parenthood is love. The eugenists point to the fact that many fine children spring from mothers that never loved the fathers of those children. Sex idealism insists on unity of love. The eugenists show that fidelity is responsible for a great deal of unproductiveness, and in so far is a waste to the species, whilst infidelity has been productive of much good to the species. Sex idealism contends that those parents are the best whose love is most steadfast. The eugenists maintain that the most important thing for humanity is that those men and women should unite for parenthood who are best equipped for it, whether with or without love, with or without marriage. They cite as examples the nations that have had a long, vigorous existence, although love played no part in the contraction of their marriages. Sex idealism replies by saying that the maintenance of a nation is one thing; the elevation

of the soul another. Nations may exist by virtue of their ignoble qualities, as well as their noble qualities. The species can be elevated only by eradicating inherited savage and animal traits through selection.

All other problems of life must be regarded from this one point of view: the elevation of the species. Are the children of the upstart millionaire as a rule strong, beautiful, and healthy? If not, then the mad chase after wealth must be condemned, not only as an indirect but as a direct hindrance to the improvement of the race. If men or women who are fit for parenthood, but not for love, suffer through celibacy and could lead a fuller life if allowed to present fine children to society; or even if some men or women are fit for love but not for a single lifelong love, then the one-love idealist has no more right to impose his standard of love upon them than they have to impose their standard upon him.

That, however, is just what is being attempted, especially among those of our youth who recognize no idealism other than their own. Even our young "free-thinkers" do



not regard the sex question with a free, open mind. They seem to think there are only two possibilities, either to be a slave to desire, or a slave to duty. And the rest "plead for chains and pray for barriers." They look up timetables, sailing dates, and Cook's tours, and take out passports for safety. Then where is the courage that goes ahead on its own responsibility, and at its own peril opens up new paths and tries to discover new countries? The young generation, even the self-styled "truth seekers," complain of the inconsistency, the contradictoriness in the treatment of this subject, forgetting that in love life itself assumes its most contradictory form. Do they not know that life is a living thing and therefore incalculable, that life is not a hard and fast fact, but a growth with undivined possibilities, that it leads us and all other creatures along mysterious paths, and so discloses things we never dreamed of in our philosophy? Have they no glimmering that life often holds in store unexpected destinies, marvellous experiences, blossoms of our own being and other beings that we shall never foresee?

Do they not feel that the beauty of life is its very incalculableness ; that greatness in life is to rise to heights through all of life's uncertainties ?

If we only perceived this, we should never demand a fixed ideal, no matter how lofty. The man who knew that the next day his ideal would become the general, established ideal would instantly destroy it, so gruesome is the thought that infinite life should thenceforth proceed according to a single model.

Idealism, we should then perceive, may signify only one thing—that each person values his ideal so highly that he is willing to live and die for it, even though to others it may seem unimportant, foolish, or even shameful.

He is an idealist who swings a heavy hammer and rams into place the stones of the concept of duty, thereby paving a smooth road for others to travel. But either side of the road stretches the earth, which bears life from the poles to the equator, life with its countless shades of customs and temperaments. To think of insisting upon a great

lifelong love as the sole moral standard for this varied life !

He who so insists has never allowed his thoughts to stray beyond the narrow circle prescribed by his like-minded neighbours. He forgets that an ideal, a thing incomprehensible to the majority, is bound to be entirely set aside if it is forced upon mankind as absolute.

To proclaim a belief that flows from one's own spiritual state is very different from demanding that same spiritual state in others. When a man proclaims his belief by his teachings or his life, he contributes to the spread of a state of soul like his own ; others are influenced to pattern their spiritual self-culture and their self-given laws of life upon his. But having proclaimed himself subjectively, his task is done.

If all social problems, customs, usages, and pleasures were to be measured by their effect upon the human race, we should perhaps arrive at that *absolute* ethical standard which is now lacking. But all this must first be investigated. In Europe monogamy is established as the absolute moral law, the necessary

condition for the maintenance and health of the nations. But among such hardy nations as the modern Japanese and the ancient Hebrews we find concubinage an institution sanctioned by law and custom. A nation in which marriages are contracted only from deep personal love is at a great disadvantage as against other nations and must perish, because deep personal love is still an exception for which so high a price must be paid, that he who has paid it does not possess the courage to impose it as an ethical demand on others.

For this and many other reasons I maintained in "Love and Marriage" that the modern sex problem consists in finding the proper equilibrium between, on the one hand, the requirements for the improvement of the species and, on the other hand, the increased demands of the individual to be happy in love ; whereas formerly the problem was only between society's demands for fixed marriage forms and the individual's demands to satisfy his sex life in any form. The sex ethics that proceeds from this new equilibrium will be the only true ethics. It will effect an uplift-

ment of life in both the species and the individual.

The problem of sex, as I have also pointed out in "Love and Marriage," is the problem of life; it is the problem of society's happiness, in comparison with which all other problems sink into insignificance. Education, every cultural effort in intellectual and religious matters will remain superficial until we regard as the main question, that which determines all other cultural schemes, the elevation of the human race. We must strive for the elevation of the human race not only as has been done heretofore through the self-improvement of the individuals in each generation, but through their selective instinct, which as it develops in insight, will enable them the better to recognize the conditions that determine the propagation of the species.

However, as against the one-sided point of view of race-culture, I have in "Love and Marriage" stated the hypothesis that in love *humanity has found the form of selection most conducive to the ennoblement of the species.* Yet the earnest truth-seeker cannot possibly think

of setting up his unproved hypothesis as an irrefragable principle. All I pleaded for was greater freedom in love, that we might have the opportunity of observing its effect. I also urged, that in the study of the influences of heredity more attention be paid to the effect of love. To gain an ever-clearer insight into the combinations that transmit ancestral traits, and so be better able to discover the laws of selection by which life in all its aspects ascends to higher levels; to make these laws morally binding, so that selection should secure the best qualities and eradicate the worst—this is indeed the universal aim of evolution.

Even those who are profoundly convinced of the importance of the one-love form as a factor in evolution, must admit that there are many other factors besides, which no idealistic fanaticism can conjure away from the process of evolution. The life force that has created out of two cells and two cell-souls our complex being, and given rise to the manifold marriage forms and ideals of love that now determine the species, is merely the last link

in a chain of evolution beginning billions of years ago. And since we know that this evolution of love was effected without any predetermined ideal type, there is no good reason to doubt that Eros will continue to mould a cosmos out of the existing chaos of sex relations, without imposing upon the present as an ethical norm the ideal type of which we are now beginning to have a dawning perception. On the other hand, those who think that the whole matter can be left to the "natural instincts," or to the gratification of the senses, or those who believe that it can be left to the divine instinct for what is good and right, forget that man's own power to create ideals has long been a factor in evolution, and that the only question at present is, "How can this force be made an agent for good in evolution?"

By bending our efforts to the improvement of the race we shall, as I explained in "Love and Marriage," build a bridge to lead from the present chaos in love toward the one personal love relation. This, too, is the only way in which love can be rid of its irrational char-

acter, which Goethe described by saying that in love everything is a hazard, because everything depends upon chance. All of this, however, is only another name for *undiscovered* laws. Some day we shall reach a point where the erotic discord between the soul and the senses *physically*, and the discord between several persons *psychically* will be impossible, for it is the desire of every soul to experience the highest happiness. And the highest happiness can be attained only through the large feelings, which by psychologic necessity excludes the many small ones. But the road still to be traversed is very long, and meanwhile there are pure souls that have loved more than once, because, having looked in vain for the complete embodiment of their ideal in one individual, they have found one side of it in one person, another side in another person. There are pure souls, who upon discovering a new soul mate can forget their previous experiences as if they had never occurred; other pure souls there are who, because they have erred in their great love, have lost their capacity for further experiences.



## Love and Ethics

“Love and Marriage” was addressed to those of our youth who have consecrated themselves with new devotion to guarding the gift of life; those, therefore, who know that the ethical law is not written upon tablets of stone, but upon tablets of flesh and blood, who feel that their own noble happiness in love is a service to life, surpassing in devotion every service to God. But the question where freedom of love ends and the right of the new generation begins, is a question which they, too, must decide.

Since we still know so little of the conditions that make for the best offspring physically as well as psychically, the faith of the idealist in the importance of love cannot obtain greater social concessions to love than those which will not endanger the certainty of evolution. Of all social concessions to be demanded the most essential is that the standard by which the morality of parenthood is measured should be, not the marriage rite, but the will of two human beings to assume the responsibility for their children, not the legitimacy of the children, but the kind of children they are. The

second social concession to be insisted upon is that the dissolution of marriage should be made dependent upon the will of one of the married pair, and that the man and woman should have equal marital rights.

While society, therefore, has until now been satisfied if husband and wife merely continued to live together, no matter under what adverse circumstances, and reared children no matter how bad, the new conception of duty will aid in the elevation of life. For these new principles have all the prerequisites to an organic growth of duty combined with happiness, of responsibility combined with rights, as well as the prerequisites to the organic union of duty, happiness, responsibility, and rights, with all the other religious, moral, and economic ideals that each day are coming to be more generally prevalent. Moreover, these principles can be adapted even now to existing conditions, in so far as such adaptation is necessary for the co-operation of souls and the universalization of customs, so that those on a lower level would be educated by the more advanced.

In society at large, as in the individual,

the attainment, through every new form, of a fuller development of power, a richer variety, and, at the same time, a completer unity, signifies an upward evolution. The forces of the spiritual life that now radiate in two different directions, would be focussed were society to protect all children alike but allow individuals to protect their love. The feeling of responsibility for the child's original character is weakened by the current conception of legitimacy, and for the child's bringing up by the current conception of illegitimacy.

That endeavour to elevate love to higher levels, the impulse by which love lives and bestows happiness, while its cessation is love's death—that endeavour will increase in infinite measure as soon as freedom of divorce puts an end to the present certainty in marriage. The fact that in some free unions also love dies, as is frequently adduced in controversion, proves nothing against this possibility of a finer love through free divorce. Often the very thing that dissolves free unions, is society's persecution of those who live in free unions. The objection is untenable that even at present

the law puts only the slightest obstacles in the way of divorce, that delicacy of feeling, a tender conscience, sympathy, and similar spiritual states usually prevent a divorce, and that accordingly under free divorce the more serious-minded would remain bound in wedlock, while the more frivolous-minded would enjoy greater freedom. For the question of free divorce does not, in the last instance, turn upon whether it prevents, or does not prevent misfortune in the present. The main thing is, that its *psychologic* effect would gradually become a growing power in creating a beautiful, dignified love life.

Proof of this may be had in a struggle that has already been fought to the finish. When parents decided the marriages of their children, particularly their daughters, when the one all-absorbing question was, "Will I or will I not obtain the object of my love?" how lacking in spiritual qualities was love then, how little part it played in the whole spiritual life, how few shadings it had, what slender demands it made upon inward harmony. All emphasis had to be laid upon the mere external struggle.

But now, when the young lovers as a rule decide their own fate, what a wealth of new spiritual sensations, of varied shadings, of sentiment, sensibility, and reserve they betray to those who are privileged to look into their souls. It is exactly in the most soulful girl that we see so marked an individualism in the will to choose for herself, that only a vague presentiment of a man's unexpressed desire will wither her feelings, should the hot breath blow upon her before her own longings have awakened. And among the loftier-minded young men, a corresponding will is growing to wait quietly for the woman of their choice, and check their desires, which develop so much more quickly than in women.

These young men and women have already travelled far beyond the danger of "throwing themselves away" on passing loves. In brief, *the very forces that liberty has set free, work against the dangerous consequences of liberty.*

In "Love and Marriage" the conviction that the sex relation must be invested with an all-pervasive, all-decisive significance and sanctity was thus expressed: love must again

become—though on a loftier level—that which it once was when the nations looked upon life with reverence : Religion.

To every one to whom Goethe's word is true, that the aim of life is life itself, love will be a religion, and not only love, but every spiritual expression of life, creation, the search for truth, joy in the beautiful, work. These will be a religion in the degree in which they are connected with the whole of life. In other words, religions perish in religion, in that all-comprehensive feeling of unity for which the upliftment of life is the only adequate divine service, and the revelations of universal life are a daily prayer. This worship will be especially dedicated to the power that carries the spark of life from generation to generation. And the more devout the worship, the more certainly will each generation rise above the preceding.

Until mankind discovers some other way of maintaining the species, the sex relation, undeniably, is the earthly origin of life. Accordingly, the evolutionary view of life must make the sex relation the starting-point for the

advancement of all life. It must harmonize the moral concept of sex with the demands for the advancement of life, and it must spread a holiness over the entire kingdom of sex, and again make it the object of reverence, *if it serves the advancement of life*. This does not mean merely that love creates a new being. It means that when created by a great love this being will enlarge the souls from generation to generation ; it means that a richer, fuller human being is created, endowed with a force of feeling that radiates its warmth. Love is not only the impulse by which the human race obtains new members ; it is the impulse by which the human race will become more closely welded together and ennobled in the degree in which the children inherit from their parents the great power to love, a power which in all human relations will react upon the whole of mankind. For everything in life is connected with sex love. Thus it is that in life-denying religions sex love is the arch-enemy, while in life-affirming religions it is the sacred impulse which not only carries the ladder of evolution but determines it.

Sex love stands in a most intimate relation with art, which gives sex selection its ideals, with literature, with the law, with work and religion. It is commonly believed that the great religious feelings are accessible to all. Nothing is farther from the truth. The religious feelings grow great only in those souls which, under other circumstances, would have been just as deeply affected by the great love. Since, evidently, souls grow greater when issuing from the union of great feelings, ideal love would enlarge the power and the right of love.

Scarcely any one as yet comprehends this idea because it is preached to a generation in which love is the most betrayed and the most coarsened, the most neglected and the most despised of all the great forces of life, so much so that even the best can hardly conceive that some day it is all bound to be different. Most people still shake their heads in doubt and misgiving when told that mankind on its way to humanity must first bethink itself of love and her justice, because only thus can it attain a higher humanity. Even the most



highly educated are so lacking in what Dante calls *intelletto d'amore*, or at least in an understanding of the importance of love culture, that they regard these words as a temptation to all lovers to inflate their own feelings until they carry them as in a balloon high above life, whence they look down upon it absorbed in twofold reverence of themselves. In other words, every defence of the value of love to life, evident to almost anybody, is construed as an exhortation to overlook all other life values for the sake of love.

Have those who speak so no knowledge of the fact that religion is sanctifying, strengthening, compelling only to the extent in which it is love, and that the soul is never more religious, nor more in need of religion, than when it loves? For the soul has a limited amount of energy. What it expends in one way it cannot give in another. Have they no knowledge of the fact that love in all its manifestations is of all feelings the most soul-enlarging, the most unifying, especially that love which absorbs what is highest in all other loves because it forms, as no other love

does, the unity of the soul and the senses, of the individual and social life; because it forms the innermost carpels of the great mystical world-rose around which all other leaves cluster?

That is why every endeavour to solve social and political problems is like building on ground shaken by an earthquake, all cultural creative activity like a stream from an infected source, all development of power in the other fields of life a growth from a shrivelled root. And it will continue to be so until a new religious reverence for love is established as the sole healthy, beautiful condition of sex life. Such a conception of love will create a firm foundation for society, it will purify the source, and convey nourishment to the root. No one who has gone through the poor quarter of a large city can have the hardihood to say that we talk too much nowadays about the social question. *But the sex relation is to-day the poor quarter of all social classes.* And yet when a single voice is raised to speak this truth, even thinking people cry out, "Too many words are wasted on love, too much importance is attached to it."

Nothing so well confirms the poet's dictum that "the present is so full of matrimonial tragedies and wasted love that it has lost its hearing for its own misfortune."

It is still only the very small minority that listen when the religious, or humanitarian preacher preaching morality, points out the ravages caused by the sins and diseases of sex life, ravages so appalling that we should suppose the social consciousness would have been aroused long ago. Hence it is not astonishing to find that practically no one as yet recognizes that these ravages have their deepest root in the denial, or the ignoring of the value of love to life. Nor is it astonishing that people do not understand when they are told of the numerous obstacles to life due to the same cause, which cannot be verified by figures.

They ransack every nook and cranny, and ferret out arguments to prove the social value of marriage. They pile figures upon figures to show that the mortality through disease and suicide and that crime and drunkenness are greater among the unmarried than the married ;

that child mortality and criminality are greater among those born out of wedlock than in wedlock. Against love, on the other hand, they adduce the divorces, suicides, and crimes it causes. But they cite no statistics of all those who have remained unmarried, or have gone insane, or become suicides, or criminals, or parents of illegitimate children, because social conditions, or the prejudices of the parents, have prevented a love marriage, because one of the two has voluntarily, or through compulsion, turned traitor to love for the sake of wealth, or "duty," or the "happiness of others."

True, we now meet but rarely with the sort of victims of which there used to be many, when parents inculcated in their daughter the idea that she "must not think of her own happiness, but the happiness of others." That is to say she must "make happy" the man whom her parents approved, but make unhappy the man she loved. That the man of the parents' choice as well as the parents themselves forgot their duty to think of the happiness of others instead of their own—that was

left quite out of count. But what a hazy conception people have even yet of the truth that happiness in the love of two young persons is an essential part of the happiness of the community ; that accordingly their main duty is to their love ; that they will be able to fulfil all their other duties better if first of all they fulfil their love duty ; that love is not the contradiction of duty, but the *first and the greatest duty* in contracting a marriage.

In sporadic instances, to be sure, the strength and victory of duty has meant the decline and fall of love, whether a happy or an unhappy love ; or the reverse has been true, love has caused the downfall of duty. But who stops to think of all the energy lost to every nation because the majority must still dissipate their energies, day in day out, in dull resignation to all the obstacles in the way of love, or in a secret struggle against love. Who counts all the half-completed works, all the energies weakened from the very start, hindered in their development or prematurely exhausted, which, when revived, never blossom fully and fail to achieve their aim, or strive for lower

aims ? All this through unhappy family life. Who stops to think that a large part of this social waste of energy could have been avoided had men and women not been taught to take everything else more seriously than the sex life ; had men and women not been educated for everything else but marriage ; had men and women not obtained from society more right for every other great life demand than for their love ?

The fact that countless human beings lead a decent, beautiful life without the happiness of love does not prove that their life might not have been still more beautiful and stronger, hence more important to society, if possessed of that happiness. Against those who, despite their lack of such happiness, are not without wisdom and warmth of feeling must be placed those who outside of marriage, or through it, have become frozen or distorted, or have gone to rack and ruin. And most people have become so not through the inevitable tragedy that love's destiny sometimes imposes and no order of society can relieve, but because the older generation has forced upon the

younger its view that love's value in life is extremely small.

When we have got to the point at which love is regarded with religious reverence as the necessary basis of the "sacredness of the generation," a large part of the present social rescue work will be rendered superfluous. The number of degenerates and erring will diminish in proportion as love becomes one of the means of man's bliss, not the sin that causes his fall. When once the mighty powers now confined in the prison of low passions, of unnecessary suffering through sex life, shall have been liberated, then not only the forces at present wasted will serve to benefit all the rest of life, but also all the new forces that love will awaken or intensify.

But the love I mean is the personal and great love, which opens up to men all the endless variety of life, not the little love dalliance which obliterates variety. That man or woman has never even divined the meaning of personal love who does not know that above all it awakens the feeling that one's own being and other people's beings are something great

and unfathomable ; that it signifies the love of the personality of another as expressed in individual and social work as well as in love and the home ; that it signifies a reverence of personality as expressed in the hour of joy as well as in the eternal questioning of the aim of life, to which love gives an added significance. He who thinks that a man imbued with such a love never concerns himself with anything but his own feelings has never known such a man. What one lives, or is through and through, one speaks and thinks about least. Even as the healthy man does not speak of his health, or the innocent man of his innocence, but health and innocence speak and think through him.

When personal love is permitted to show its power to create what Ruskin has called the real wealth of nations, " as many healthy, full-blooded, happy human beings as possible," then humanity will reduce to harmony one of the great fundamental contradictions of life, the contradiction between man's being and woman's being. Then, too, the general prospects will be widened, the other painful con-



traditions of life will be harmonized, and humanity will begin to reach up to the heights to which the present generation is but a step. Love must attain the prestige and the esteem now withheld from it, because, as I have said, the evolution of love is the mightiest weapon for the unbroken chain of human birth, by which generation after generation inherits and transmits its physical and psychical powers, which grow nobler and attain a finer equilibrium the more closely together love can weld the masculine and the feminine.

But love, in its evolution, has already become an important factor in harmonizing masculine and feminine qualities. Thus we see men and women co-operating in the solution of the social problems. Yet their co-operation is, as a rule, a merely mechanical combination of masculine and feminine capacities, though growing ever more organic. More and more masculine and feminine souls combine for the furtherance of all the aims of life. The will of the modern woman that *marriage should continue to be love* signifies, among other things, that the spiritual inter-

change between man and woman and their common life must embrace more than merely the sphere of domestic life. It signifies that each loves the expression of the personality of the other in fields outside their own common life. Man will thus voluntarily encourage woman's influence in fields of work in which, left to himself with his masculine mode of thought and action, he has for so long not only wasted the new lives woman gave to humanity, but also the new intellectual forces which she has created, especially her own deeper and finer susceptibility.

An increasing number of women, for example, are their husbands' friends in the same line of work. Both together, or each for himself, but acting and reacting on each other, they accomplish so much more than would be possible for each alone. While this co-operation is attained through love, those imbued with the new idea no longer consider love a means for attaining other ends. They consider it something to be striven for as an aim in itself. For they never feel they are done with their love. In love, as in everything

else, they want to attain to ever higher stages.

Men, it is true, maintain that love can never fill their existence as completely as it does woman's, because by a natural necessity man seeks the rest of life's variety outside, where his instinct for action and creation constantly finds new aims ; while to a woman it is equally natural to turn to the inside, where by an immutable law she finds her highest sphere of action as a mother. Or, as the poet before quoted has expressed it : " Man can merely love, woman is love itself." When man becomes womanish in this regard, or woman mannish, the contrast, that is, the spiritual condition of sex love, is removed. The " femininity " that man loves in woman is that very inward-turning quality ; and the " masculinity " that woman loves in man is that very outward-turning quality. It is an indisputable fact that if the majority of women no longer had the calm and repose to abide at the source of life, but wanted to navigate all the seas with men, the sex contrasts would resolve themselves not into harmony but into monotony.

Until women come to recognize this it must still be insisted that the gain to society is nothing if millions of women do the work that men could do better, and evade or fulfil but poorly the greater tasks of life and happiness, the *creation of men* and the *creation of souls*. To fulfil these tasks properly women require the same human rights as men, and until they have obtained these rights "feminism" has still all its work before it. But in proportion as women acquire the right of suffrage, using this word not merely in its narrow political sense, but in all senses, the right of choice or selection in general—in proportion as they acquire this right they must learn to use it in the field of life. They must learn to know that their power is greatest in those provinces in which "imponderable" values are created, values that cannot be reduced to figures and yet are the sole values capable of transforming humanity. Of what avail is it for women to speak at peace congresses if the children in their own nurseries get whippings or beat one another? Of what avail for women to speak at ethical congresses if they

are unable to save even one man from the misery of being a mere fragment, if they are unable to bring harmonious unity into his life. Feminism finds a very apt criticism in two apophthegms of Goethe. He speaks of the folly of fleeing the sun to warm oneself at the frost ; and the first condition of wisdom, he says, is, " To seem nothing, to be everything."

The sun diffuses its warmth where the values of the soul grow ; the frost reigns where utilities are created that the soul reckons not of.

The values of the soul are to be found in the world of feelings. It is a pity the modern American reform proposition has so blinded many women that they do not see that the American programme is like the American birds whose colours are magnificent but who cannot sing. The American soul in general still lacks music. It has no ear for the tones and half-tones of life. The millions of women in America who leave the care of their homes and children to collective work while they themselves follow their professions or their trades only *seem* to be socially useful. For it is not utilities but complete human beings

that elevate life. Accordingly, all the outward improvements through legislation and social work remain on the whole without effect, because neither men nor women understand that what really counts is the work done in the field of ethical values and in the furtherance of spiritual conditions.

Forms, it is true, react upon spiritual conditions, but spiritual conditions react infinitely more upon forms. The best forms for marriage, for the right of motherhood, and for the protection of children will remain ineffective so long as women are unable to follow the seven commandments given them by Schleiermacher, commandments which, if followed, would renew humanity from within outward. The sense, not the wording, of these commandments is :

Thou shalt have no lover except the one lover, but thou shalt be a friend of thy friends without eagerness to please and without flirtatiousness.

Thou shalt create no ideal unto thyself, neither after thine own image, nor after the image of others, but thou shalt love thy hus-

band for his own sake, for *what* he is and for the *way* he is. For nature is a stern avenger, who visits the empty romanticism of the girl upon the woman unto the third and fourth period of her emotions.

Thou shalt not profane the sanctum of thy love, for whosoever gives herself away for any profit whatsoever, even if it be for the legal right to be a mother, loses her fineness of feeling.

Thou shalt contract no marriage that shall have to be broken.

Thou shalt not desire to be loved by him whom thou lovest not likewise.

Thou shalt not bear false testimony either in word or in deed by putting a fine gloss over the barbarities of our present customs.

Thou shalt desire the education, the art, the wisdom, and the honour of men.

There is nothing more futile than to try to prove the inferiority of woman to man, unless it be to try to prove her equality. That the reflexive life is stronger in woman than in man is as important for the elevation of life, as that man's strength displays itself in another

direction. Just as the difference between man and woman is essential in the natural life, so also is it essential in the cultural life. Unnamed, women co-operate in men's works, and men in women's works. The third sex will never have a share in the work of creation. Spiritual *fruitfulness* will result only in the measure in which woman's soul is organically welded with the man's works and ideals, and the man's soul with the woman's works and ideals. That man's work belongs more to the *individual* side of life and so often leads to strife and division, but also to progress and neo-formation ; that woman's work belongs more to the *social* side of life and so often makes for cohesiveness ; that she is a better guardian of the warmth of feeling that " has gradually made its way into human life," as Björnson says—all this does not tip the scale of values one fraction of an ounce in favour of the one rather than the other.

Americanism views all problems of life from a very low standpoint in regarding the question of self-maintenance as woman's principal aim. Self-maintenance for the woman



as well as for the man, is merely the primary external prerequisite to a dignified human existence. The most important step, especially for the future of socialism, is to give every one the opportunity of self-maintenance by means of the work he is best able to do, the work, therefore, which will conduce most to his happiness. This is important for the very reason that such work yields *the greatest values to society*. And when a profounder culture will have given us deeper insight into these things, it will seem as natural for society to maintain its women as it is now natural for it to maintain its army and navy, because women perform the greatest social function when they educate the new generation. It would be sad, indeed, if the new society were to make an engineer out of a Beethoven or a Wagner. And it would be an equally great misuse of energy, if it put mothers to work outside the home instead of making them educators of the soul. That most mothers *now* employ a method of education which is to education what organ-grinding is to music, merely proves that every art must be learned.

But it does not prove that women's energies would on the whole be better utilized if applied to other tasks than that of educating a more perfect human race, a task for which all present endeavours are mere preparations and the general connection of which is not yet understood. A more perfect race means a more soulful race ; a more soulful race a race having greater capacity for love. And from no other centre can this growing power of love radiate toward all fields of life than from the love between man and woman, between parents and children.

**T**HUS, the most encouraging sign of the time, that which holds out the greatest promise, is the fact that the modern woman's intellectual development, and the modern man's erotic development, have reached a stage at which they are beginning to invest with a new significance the woman's inward-turning quality and the man's outward-turning quality. We are perceiving the possibility of a love which will be the synthesis of both qualities, when woman has learned from man to esteem beauty in the form of activity, and he has learned from her to esteem beauty in the form of repose.

Although Eros still seems of as slight importance to men in general as the planet of the same name, yet the older Eros has engrossed their attention as much as the newly discovered Eros has the astronomers' attention ; because so many other questions are connected with

the problems evoked by the earthly as well as the heavenly Eros. Eros is so easily able to force a man off his track, that "he has been generally compelled to follow his calling in life in the company of love or in rebellion against it." This experience is probably the chief reason for man's old hatred of woman. He felt lowered by the kind of love he permitted himself, and he felt injured if he permitted himself no love at all. The present stage of woman's emancipation has produced new adverse conditions for men through the disintegration brought about either by her social activity, or by her love. Father and mother have thus begun to suffer from lack of a home since women have grown tired of sitting at home, and waiting for the *heures perdues* of their husbands—as such men have until now regarded the hours devoted to the home ; not without reason, seeing that women have filled those hours in their youth with billing and cooing, in later years with grumbling and squabbling.

But in all cases in which there is an affinity of souls and the sympathy of friendship, love

is what it always was and always will be ; the co-operation of the father with the mother in the education of the children, as well as the co-operation of the mother with the father in all other great social works. If such parents were to do nothing but give life to their children, and were to leave their education to society, they would feel deprived of the best part of parenthood, their life in common, in which the personality of the man beloved of the mother and the personality of the woman beloved of the father exert direct influence upon the children, more important than all other education, and increasing in importance in proportion as the parents grow through each other.

We are thus led to the conclusion that because happiness through love satisfies one of the deepest demands of human nature, and directly sets in motion some of its best forces and increases others, the happiness of the individual in love constitutes a social value, and the higher the standard of love of the individuals, the higher will be the entire plane of society.

But not all human beings are endowed with the gift to love. Even those who possess it have other propensities besides. Consequently, neither to the man nor the woman can the concept of happiness in general mean quite the same as happiness in love, nor, in the main, can it mean the satisfaction of those needs or the application of those capacities which depend on conditions over which the individual is himself not quite master. Happiness that does not signify the highest possible development of all our powers would seem small. The meaning of happiness is the perfection of every great capacity, and the constant expectation of satisfying still greater and greater demands for perfection. Happiness means to love, work, think, suffer, and enjoy on an ever higher plane. This height is attained sometimes through "happy," sometimes through "unhappy" circumstances. Thus happiness in its profoundest sense is the elevation of life through the destinies of life. In this sense happiness is the sole duty to him who sees the aim of life in life itself. For so long as there is left a single duty that has not

been transformed into the feeling of happiness, the individual's life and the life of the great collectivity are still without their full meaning.

In all human interests happiness is at once the end and the means ; and not least so in philanthropic work for the happiness of others. Philanthropy, or social work, will fail just as Christian charity failed, if performed merely for the sake of others. It is only through his own demands for happiness or the conditions that have satisfied them that *a man can have any knowledge of what those demands and conditions are to others*. The social reformer indifferent to his own happiness is nothing but a blind leader of the blind.

Happiness as a duty is a concept which in its relation to love may be illustrated by a {comparison with another great value of happiness, that of health. In the Middle Ages, when men tried to enfeeble their bodies by hunger, dirt, and other mortifications of the flesh, when they saw God's punishment in plagues and its cure in processions of flagellants, they could not have had the remotest notion of sanitation as we conceive it to-day. It

was not until health came to be regarded as the will of God that individuals considered it their duty to promote it ; and it was not until life on earth came to be regarded as a good thing that society conceived it to be its duty to apply the achievements of science to laws of health, the overcoming of disease, and the prolongation of life. Health gradually became an end in itself, happiness, which we are justified in striving for for its own sake, irrespective of whether it may be made useful for other purposes or not. Nevertheless, even to-day there are still sick people whose spiritual life has had the effect of intensifying their physical malady. There are many again who, despite their conscientiousness in promoting their health, have had the misfortune to lose it. There are some who are selfish in the excessive care they take of their health ; others who are magnanimous in sacrificing their health for an end they regard as higher. But all this does not vitiate the general rule, that every individual regards and treats his health as of so great a direct value to himself and society, that it is his duty as well as his right



to strive for the happiness of health for his own sake, not merely for the sake of others. In other words the entire conception of the Middle Ages has in this case been completely reversed.

Coming generations will similarly reverse the present conception of love, a conception still as inimical to life as was the idea of health in the Middle Ages. This inversion or transmutation of values will not prevent the appearance of conditions in love similar to those which I have just mentioned in regard to health. But the great principle remains, that each individual will regard and treat his love as a great value both to himself and society, and that it will be his duty as well as his right to strive for this happiness.

**S**INCE the above was written Doctor Foerster has made a criticism of my views ; which in his Christian ascetic conception of life is quite natural. According to this conception obedience to the laws of bourgeois society and religious authority is the only road to a higher evolution ; self-discipline and self-renunciation the best conditions of growth. Every word spoken in behalf of the sanctity and the right of love is in this view " worship of nature." Suffering, not passion, should be the road to that higher culture which is to be attained through self-conquest. The best love is fidelity and patience ; these alone release the profoundest spiritual forces and join man to the divine. Fidelity in marriage frees man from his sensual instincts and passions and affords him the possibility of personal development in the higher sense. On the other hand " free love " does not develop these spiritual conditions, and

motherhood out of wedlock must be rejected, because it does not give the child a secure place in a settled family life, and does not entail serious responsibility for the child. Since the child has sprung from passion alone the mother's love fades away in the face of responsibility.

These views in the ascetic conception of life are, as I have said, natural. But he to whom the aim of life is life itself feels the same reverence for its sensual as for its spiritual demands. He knows there is immoral asceticism just as there is immoral sensual passion—immoral, because it is not uplifting to humanity or the individual. He knows that when two unmarried persons give life to a child, nature often rewards "passion" by endowing the child with splendid equipment. Nature seems to pursue a mysterious purpose with this quality of "passion" which the sense of responsibility cannot achieve.

The important thing, therefore, is to harmonize our concepts of right with nature, after we have learned to know nature by thorough investigation. It is not important to suppress nature unconditionally in favour

of moral concepts distinctly opposed to nature. A higher culture in love can be attained only by correlating self-control with *love and parental responsibility*, a correlation that will follow as a consequence *when love and parental responsibility are made the sole conditions of sex relations.*

For this reason the young generation must be educated to ever greater demands in love, to an ever higher conception of their right to parenthood. Self-control must be taught in all those relations in which it is a condition of true love and healthy parenthood. But self-renunciation must not be preached when complete happiness in love will contribute to the growth of the individual soul and humanity at large.

It is solely from this one moral point of view that motherhood without marriage, as well as the right of free divorce must be judged. Irresponsible motherhood is *always* sin with or without marriage; responsible motherhood is always sacred with or without marriage. Freedom of divorce can never remove the obstacles that feelings and circumstances place in the way of motherhood. But it can over-

come the irrational doctrine that it is always the death of the soul to sacrifice others, and the life of the soul to sacrifice oneself for others, and that the individual who decides the question of sacrifice in his own favour thereby proves his worthlessness to society.

Unprejudiced reflection, however, shows that in an unhappy marriage one of the parties must sacrifice the other. He who goes, sacrifices the one that wants to hold him back ; he who is held back is the victim of him that restrains him. Sometimes it is a greater sin to allow oneself to be sacrificed than to sacrifice others, at other times the reverse is true. And if we are asked who is to decide which is the lesser sin the answer is : the individual's conscience which has to decide other equally difficult conflicts in duty. There is but one alternative, either the Catholic marriage, or freedom on one's own responsibility.

As with all other questions the answer to this question depends upon one's conception of life.

Either we believe that man must bend his reason, his will, and his conscience to the decrees of authority, or we believe that man may find his own way through repeated experience and

many and various trials of power. Either we believe that obedience is the sole road to a higher culture, or we believe that rebellion may be just as essential as obedience. Either we believe that the sensual instincts are pitfalls and obstacles, or we regard them as guides in the upward movement of life on a par with reason and conscience. If we hold the latter opinion then we know that in sex life right and wrong, growth and decay, sacrifice of oneself and sacrifice of others are more closely connected with one another than in any other province of life ; that in sex life " right " often becomes " wrong " ; that he who sacrifices the other is perhaps secretly the victim of his victim ; that " passion " produces great and beautiful effects which duty cannot achieve.

The one necessary thing is *to make ever greater demands upon the men and women who take to themselves the right to give humanity new beings.*

In order to make room for these new demands, the ethical conception that makes the right of parenthood dependent upon the present fixed forms of marriage must fall. Then, and then only, will the entire moral emphasis be laid upon the physical and psychical

character of men, and parents will become the most important factor for the children and the traits they inherit. Not until the character of the child becomes *the determining element in society's moral conceptions*, will natural morality replace the morality opposed to nature. Not that all asceticism will become unnecessary, but it will not be brought into requisition except when it serves the progress of life. And not that all fidelity must cease. Fidelity will become personal, husband and wife, like two friends, will show consideration, tenderness, and kindness to each other because they will know that that is the only way of their preserving each other's love, the only way their love can attain its full stature.

The more souls develop the more they demand, not of the strongest sensual passions, but of *the greatest spiritual love*. For his own sake the lover exacts from himself the control of his passion, and for his own sake he guides his hand carefully in the cultivation of all conditions necessary to a common life. Thus the energies of the soul are freed *from within outwardly*. For we learn by experience that the more intimately, tenderly, and com-

pletely we love the more happiness we possess and give through our love.

The old morality that still claims the right to be considered the only real morality, is built upon a conception of life according to which the divine resides exclusively in the spirit and the will, not in the body and its instincts and impulses. It is a conception that must have the support of authority and dare not rely upon its own laws.

The new morality, on the other hand, does not regard the spiritual as hostile to the physical, nor does it call every manifestation of nature "divine." It sees in the sensual and the spiritual *the two forms of the divine* and it holds that the divine reveals itself the more clearly, the more the bodily and the spiritual pervade each other. The animal man feels no contradiction between the senses and the spirit. The "spiritual" man seeks to rid himself of the dualism he feels by suppressing the sensual. The new morality aims *to remove the contradiction*. In love this can be done only by means of true love. *Through the lack or the possession of this sense of unity each one is able to see for himself the value and justification of his love.*



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